



Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 27th October 2025 at the Cleobury Country Centre, Cleobury Mortimer commencing at 7.35pm.

Present:

Cllr Geoff Hainsworth, Cllr Guy James, Cllr David Abbatiello and Cllr Helen Smith.
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: Mrs D McBride.

Chair, Cllr Hainsworth welcomed everyone to the October Finance Committee meeting.

10.01.25F Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Sally Burns.

10.02.25F Declaration of interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

10.03.25F Public Participation Session.

There were no members of public present.

10.04.25F Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 24th July 2025

The Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 24th July 2025, were approved and duly signed by the Chair.

10.05.25F Matters Arising from the Minutes / Update since last Finance Committee meeting.

1. The Clerk had circulated the Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee with the Meeting papers and also briefed the new member on the role of the Finance Committee.
2. The Clerk provided an update on the audit of the 2024-25 accounting year. The External Auditor has stated we must ensure we address the internal auditor's recommendations:

- 1) Amend a typographical error on the AGAR – DONE.
- 2) Review general reserves to ensure adequate levels as per sector guidance – DONE (This was reviewed for the 2025-26 budget and is in consideration for the 2026-27 budget to aim for at least 25% Net Revenue Expenditure.)
- 3) Fidelity Guarantee – review the adequacy of the level of fidelity cover – DONE (paid additional premium to increase the cover appropriately).
- 4) Cemetery Administration requires sequential invoicing with a clear audit trail to the fee structure and ensure grave numbers are recorded on all supporting documents – NOW IN PLACE.
- 5) Risk Management Policy - should include supplier fraud and measures to prevent this – DONE.

The Direct Debit form for BT payments from the Unity Trust Bank was signed. The form to confirm the Town Council's new business address with Unity Trust Bank was signed.

10.06.25F 2025-26 Accounts year-to-date.

1. The Receipts and Payments account figures were reviewed against budget and year-end forecast figures. It was noted that some items are showing as over or under budget this year. The Neighbourhood Fund receipt is only £61.23, not the estimated £6,000. Cemetery Receipts are higher than forecast. Fees, Subscriptions and Insurance are higher than budgeted. Street Lighting costs are lower due to an improved contract with SSE. Planned tree work has been paid this year but was budgeted for in last year's figures. There will be further tree work this winter however. The Finance Committee approved the Receipts and Payments as presented and this was duly signed by the Chair.
2. The Bank Reconciliation was reviewed as being correct and duly signed by the Chair.
3. The Petty Cash Account was reviewed as being correct and duly signed by the Chair.
4. The Earmarked Reserves were reviewed along with capital and revenue expenditure items. The Finance Committee approved the Earmarked Reserves and this document was duly signed by the Chair. The Finance Committee approved the purchase of three new picnic benches for the QEII Park as per the quotations provided – this is within the projects and budget provision. The Maintenance Service of the Outdoor Gym equipment was approved noting that a replacement part is also being fitted free-of-charge due to a manufacturing fault.

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Initials.....



10.07.25F Proposals for draft Budget for 2026-27.

1. Committee members proposed and considered future projects and financial requirements with a view to putting together the Business Plan and Budget for 2026-27. Proposals include extending the Bike Trail and making further improvements to our Open Spaces provision including benches for the Playing Field especially in front of the Sports and Social Club. An increase in staffing costs is required to cover the additional maintenance work and office administration.
2. The Committee reviewed the first draft Budget for 2026-27. Each item was considered and a few adjustments were made with corresponding recalculations to the proposed precept.
3. The Committee reviewed the Fees and Charges for 2026-27. The proposed figures will be subject to Council approval in February 2026 - in conjunction with the budget for 2026-27.
4. The Committee considered the draft specification and costings of a proposed consultation regarding the budget for 2026-27. The amended draft will be recommended for Council approval at the November Council meeting. Costings and process of delivery were considered and it was felt that the Royal Mail Ad Mailer was the most effective method.

10.08.25F Date of the next Finance Committee meeting.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on Monday 12th January 2026 at 7.15pm at The Market Hall, Church Street, Cleobury Mortimer.

Meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed Chairman: *G Hainsworth*

Date: 12th January 2026